THE FIRE CRACKER AND THE TOAD.

"Oh, fire cracker, round and red
"Come play with me!" the hop toad said.

The cracker, no reply made he,
But simply sputtered spitefully.

"Why won't you stop and play, my dear?"
Inquired the hop toad, drawing near.

The cracker gave a crackling cough.
"I can't, because I'm going off!"

The hop toad asked, "You're going where?
And shall you like it when you're there?"

"And do you go a pleasant road?"
The cracker's eyes with anger glowed.

Then into an awful rage he flew
And into a thousand pieces, too!

And that was the end of the cracker red;
And the poor hop toad was dead, dead, dead!

The moral is, "Don't talk too much,
Or you may need a sling and crutch!"

Miss Dorothy Stirling and the Declaration of Independence

THE year 1776 was long remembered by little Dorothy Stirling, who was then just ten years old, and lived with her parents in a pretty vine covered house on the outskirts of Flatbush, which, as you know, is on Long Island. On July 1, her father, having important matters to attend to in New York, took his wife and daughter over there with him, and they stayed at the house of a friend. This house stood at what is now the corner of Broadway and Leonard street, but in those days it was all open country, lovely green fields and pasture land. And right in front of the house was a great, broad sheet of water, called the Collect Pond. Dorothy had been to New York once before, and then it was midwinter, when this pond was frozen over, and crowds of boys and girls and even grown people were to be seen gliding over its smooth surface. Dorothy herself had skated there.

But the pond is there no more. It has been all filled in and great tall buildings erected over it, and right in the centre of where it was stands that gloomy, forbidding prison called the Tombs.

The hot, sultry month of July, 1776, was destined to be the most eventful in the history of our country. Wonderful events were taking place, and the old city of New York was filled with bustle and suppressed excitement. Dorothy did not understand what it all meant, but she knew something unusual was happening. Her father, instead of laughing and romping with her as he was wont to do when he came home at night, was very grave and quiet, and sometimes he would hold his little daughter in his arms for a whole hour without saying a word, gazing out through the open window over the green fields and the shimmering surface of the pond, with a look on his face that made tender hearted Dorothy murmur softly, "Poor papa," and with her little hands she would try to brush away the deep wrinkles that had gathered on his brow. Her pretty, bright little mother had grown quiet and sad, too; and once Dorothy found her sewing on a gay blue coat with brass buttons and weeping bitterly.

"Mamma," said Dorothy, kneeling at her mother's side, "what makes you cry, and what makes everybody so grave? Please tell me."

"Dorothy," said Mrs. Stirling, stroking the child's fair hair, "the time has nearly come when all brave and loyal men like papa must fight for their country, and when all true women like you and me, my darling, must stand by them, for they will need our help and comfort sorely before 'tis all over."

Then she told her daughter that the English King had not dealt fairly by his people in America, and that they had determined to rebel from his authority and rule themselves, and this little girl learned that her father was going to be a soldier and carry a fine sword and fight against the English when the right time came.

The next day her father took her down to Bowling Green to see some soldiers drill. They were gay looking fellows in knickerbockers, with funny powdered wigs and long cues under their three cornered hats. And then Captain Stirling took her down to the water's edge and pointed out a lot of the King's ships, with flags flying, that lay on Staten Island. And as she [illegible] the roll of drums and the sharp squeak of the fifes came floating over the bay.

Dorothy clapped her hands in delight. "Oh! papa!" she cried, "do you think they will come to New York? I love to hear the drums!"

"I fear so, dear," said the father, picking up his little daughter and kissing her. "But it will be another tune they'll play." As they were starting on their way home there was the sharp clatter of hoofs and the mad hurrahing of a mighty crowd that surged about a solitary horseman as he drew up at a tavern in Bowling Green. The rider was covered with dust and his hat was gone, while the poor jaded horse was covered with foam from his hard ride.

"Hark!" cried Captain Stirling "Hark to what the man is saying!"

"We are declared free and independent States by the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. It was ratified on the Fourth of July. We are free!"

These were the words that rang in the ears of Dorothy and her father. "Down with King George! Down with the tyrant!" came the echoing cry from the crowd that was growing larger every minute. And then in a moment there was a rush to the centre of the square, where stood a large leaden statue of King George III. Great ropes were wound around it and willing hands clutched the loose end, and amid a deafening shout the great figure came crashing to the ground.

Frightened, Dorothy clung close to her father and she could feel his strong arms tremble as they held her tight. She looked up into his face. His eyes were flashing fiercely, and his broad chest was heaving like a man who had run a long, long way and was out of breath.

"Papa," said Dorothy, timidly, "are you angry at those rough men for pulling down the King's statue?"

"No, child," replied her father in a voice she hardly knew it was so strange and harsh. "No, child," he cried, "I glory in the sight! See the rabble hacking at that leaden figure on the ground! 'Tis like a foretaste of the time soon to come when we shall be hacking at the King himself—at the hirelings of the King!"

It was a strange speech to make to a little girl, but those were troublous times, and children no older than Dorothy learned to know and dread the sound of musketry, of rolling drums, of clashing swords and many a little one on going to bed would see a bright glare in the sky that told of a burning village wantonly fired by some British soldiers.

Dorothy and her papa went home and told Mrs Stirling of the wonderful news. At dinner that night Dorothy noticed that her papa and mamma did not talk much about the Declaration of Independence to the friends whom they were visiting and she soon discovered that this was because they were loyal to the King. Such people were called Tories while those who, like her parents, were against the King, were called Whigs. Still, though the Stirlings differed with their host, they were too old friends to quarrel openly. Dorothy and her parents continued to stay in New York for several weeks, and on Sunday, August 18, they attended service in the old Lutheran church, in Broadway. As Dorothy, with her father and mother, walked down town to the quaint old edifice, whose pastor was a friend of Captain Stirling, they met great crowds of women and children hurrying by, their arms full of household goods.

"The King's war ships are coming up the harbor to bombard New York!" they cried and the poor frightened creatures were fleeing to the open country, where they hoped to be safe from the deadly cannon, taking such food and clothing with them as they could carry.

But the Stirlings kept on their way to church, and they found quite a few loyal people there when they arrived.

"Amid a Deafening Shout the Great Figure Came Crashing to the Ground."

All was quiet and peaceful within its walls, till suddenly in the midst of singing a hymn there came a dull boom in the distance, and then something crashed on a neighboring roof, demolishing a tall chimney and sending a shower of bricks clattering on the pavement below. Then came another crash, even closer, that shivered one of the stained glass windows of the church. The organ stopped short, and the singing ended in hysterical screams. Even Captain Stirling jumped to his feet. Then the calm voice of the white haired old minister was heard as he closed his hymn book with a snap.

"Brethren," he said, "let us pray!" and obedient to their pastor's command, they knelt down in silence. And there was nothing heard save the low, even voice of the clergyman and the distant shouts and noises from Bowling Green.

After church was over the people learned that the shooting was from a British ship which had been anchored up the Hudson, and that her commander had amused himself with a little cannonading as he sailed past the city on his way to join the King's fleet off Staten Island. That same night Dorothy was awakened and found her father and mother bending over her little bed, and she was told to get up at once and dress, that a messenger had come from Long Island telling her father that his regiment was preparing for a conflict with King George's Hessians, who were about to land on the island, and that he must return with all speed and join his own company. Before poor, sleepy little Dorothy quite knew what had happened she was hastily bundled up and put in a covered carriage and immediately they were tearing down the road as fast as the two horses and the darkness of the night would allow.

As long as she lived Dorothy never forgot that mysterious midnight ride to her home. It was almost pitch dark, and every now and then the carriage would come to an abrupt stop while the coachman and Captain Stirling held a consultation in muffled tones as to whether they were keeping on the right road.

Dorothy fell asleep after a while, and when she next awoke they were all in a flat bottomed boat being rowed across the East river to the opposite shore. Then came another long ride over a rough country road till finally just as day was dawning, they drove up to their own little home and their two faithful negro servants were at the door to receive them. The Captain had wanted to send his wife and daughter somewhere where they might be out of danger, but his loyal wife would not hear of going away. Besides it seemed as though they would be about as safe at home as anywhere else. Up North were the dreaded Indians and, in fact, danger seemed to lurk in every spot.

Then came days of anxious waiting for Mrs Stirling and Dorothy while the Captain was away with his regiment. It seemed to his little daughter that she had grown years older since that first day of July when she had started for New York with her parents. She had seen so much and learned so many things too. Among others she had learned that if any stranger should ask where her father was she was simply to say that he was away on business but that he did not know where, which was no lie for she really did not know just where he was.

She had also learned to be a brave little girl who was not to cry at strange sounds and rough voices, but she must be quiet and gentle and a comfort to her mother. So her father had told her when he kissed her and went away dressed in his beautiful uniform and with his shining sword dangling at his side. His daughter, as she watched his tall figure disappear around a bend in the road, said to herself that there never was such a papa since the world began and she said a little prayer right there and there that the wicked British soldiers might do him no harm.

One frightfully hot afternoon toward the end of August there came the sounds of heavy shooting. Volley after volley rattled out and echoed through the woods. First the firing seemed far off, but by and by the sound grew nearer and just as the sun was setting—a huge, blood red ball—the shouts of the fighting men came plainly to little Dorothy as she sat on the front porch, knitting a pair of hose for her father. Mrs Stirling was away spending a few hours with a friend in Jamaica, and the two colored servants had gone to the pasture land to drive home the unruly cows. Suddenly Dorothy was astonished to see a broken line of men come down the road toward the house on a dead run, and her own father brought up the rear.

She hardly knew him at first. His coat was gone and his left arm was in a sling. His men were in an equally damaged condition. "Make for the marsh back of the house, boys," he shouted "and wade through to the other side. I will join you in a few minutes at the top of Pine Knoll."

Then he caught Dorothy up in his arms and kissed her. "Where's mammy?" he asked.

"Mamma is over at Jamaica," she told him.

"Oh the evil luck!" he groaned. "I must see her."

"Look here, child," he went on, "the Hessians are after us. There are too many for us to stand battle with them. I will hide in the swamp till your mamma comes back. And when it is quite dark tell her to come and meet me by the old willow tree. If they hunt me down I shall have to make across the marsh, and when I have joined my men and we are safely hid from pursuit I will fire three musket shots as a signal. That will let you know I am all right. Now run into the house, dear, and tell no one but mamma that you have seen me. Good-by." And he was gone.

Three minutes later a long glittering column of soldiers, in bright red coats with a drum corps at their head marched up the road where her father had come and halted before the house. The commanding officer, a fat little German, with a great big nose and tiny restless eyes, came up to the door.

"Whose house is dis?" he asked of Dorothy.

"If it please you, sir," replied she, making a deep curtesy, "this is the home of Mr. Richard Stirling."

"Ach!" said the Dutchman. "So! Vell, who are you?"

"I am his daughter Dorothy, sir."

The officer suddenly stooped down till his face was on a level with hers, and fixed his little eyes on her face.

"Vere is your fader und his men? Tell me dat, child!" he commanded, pinching her cheek with his gloved hand.

Dorothy wanted to cry, for he hurt her and frightened her, too. But she remembered that she must be brave and not let the soldiers know where her father was hid.

"We don't want to do him any harm," went on the officer, wrinkling up his fat face into what was meant to be a pleasant smile. "Ve shoost vant to hav a leetle talk mid him. But if you won't tell us vere is he, ve vill hav to look about here ourselves."

That would not do, Dorothy thought. They would surely find her father in the marsh, and, besides, if the Hessians stayed about there her mamma would have no chance to see her papa. Then this little ten-year-old girl, spurred on by her love and loyalty, set about to fool this fat old German in a way that would have done credit to an old gray-head.

"I can take you to my father, but it is a long, long way," she said, looking up at the officer with her big, innocent eyes. "And I'll lead you to him if you will play the drums for me. I love to march to drums!"

"Ach!" cried the officer, rubbing his fat hands. "You are a goot leetle girl. You shall command, and ze drums shall play a leetle bit. Not much for your papa might hear zem, but we want to gif him a pleasant leetle surprise!" Here the man gave a queer gurgling laugh.

Then he took Dorothy by the hand and led her to the head of the column. "Now," he said, "which iss de way?"

Dorothy pointed down a road that led away from the marshy land. "But we must hurry," she cried, "or we shall be too late to catch him." The officer issued a command in a foreign tongue and the long column of soldiers was again in motion, with the fat German and Dorothy leading the way.

"The drums," said Dorothy, reproachfully. "Why don't they beat the drums?"

The officer laughed and gave another order, and immediately the "rat-a-tat-tat! rat-a-tat-tat!" was echoing through the woods.

"Dere, my leetle gurl; how you like dat eh?"

"It's beautiful," said the little guide, and all the time she was wondering if her father had heard the warning sound.

On and on through the growing twilight they marched. The drums had been stopped and officers were holding their swords as they lay in their scabbards across their arms so that there might be no clanking as they walked. For, as they approached the spot where it was supposed Captain Stirling lay in hiding with his men, they wished to creep upon him as quietly as possible.

Poor Dorothy grew very tired. Her little feet ached so she could hardly walk and she was far from home with a lot of rough, strange men, who would do harm to her dear father if they could catch him. Still she kept bravely on, mile after mile. All the time she strained her ears for the sound of the three musket shots that would tell of her father's escape.

"Vere is your fader und his men? Tell me dat, child!" he commanded, pinching her cheek with his gloved hand.

"Are we most dere?" asked the officer for the third time.

"Yes," said little Dorothy, "almost there. The tavern where they will stop for the night is but a mile beyond."

"Ach! Gut!" said the commander. Then he called a halt, and sent out a skirmish line to creep forward in the darkness and around the tavern, the outlines of which were faintly visible against the afterglow in the western sky.

Poor Dorothy! She had never told such stories in all her life before, but her wits were sharpened by the thought that perhaps her father's safety depended on what she said and did.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Three musket shots in slow succession rang out faintly on the still night air.

"Ach!" muttered the German commander, cocking his head like a frightened sparrow. "I vonder vat dat iss. It sounds a gut way off."

"Th-that's papa!" whimpered the little maid. "And he's safe now, and you can't catch him!" And with that Dorothy flung herself upon the ground and burst into hysterical sobs. "You can kill me!" she cried, "but he's safe, and you can't catch him."

The German grew purple in the face when it dawned on him what a fool this mite of a girl had made of him, and he swore a mighty oath; in fact, many of them. Then what do you suppose he did? He went over to poor Dorothy, who was weeping her heart out on the damp ground, and picked her up in his arms.

"Dere, dere!" he muttered. "Don't cry. No von will hurt you. You are a brave leetle girl. De bravest I effer know. You shall go home. I vill take you."

Poor Mrs. Stirling, wild with grief and alarm at the absence of her daughter went to the front door for the fiftieth time that evening and saw a strange sight. Up the dusty road came the Hessian officer, and in his arms was little Dorothy, fast asleep.

"Madam!" said that gentleman as he deposited his burden in the arms of the thankful mother. "Madam, I bring back your daughter. She led me a fool's errand to save her fadder. Und vat do I say? I say I vish I had such a daughter und I should be so broud!" And then the funny little fat officer made a stately bow and went away to join his comrades.

Captain Stirling lived to be a great and honored man, and as for little Dorothy, she lived to have grandchildren of her own, and none was more eager to celebrate the Fourth of July than she.—New York Sunday Herald.

The Farmer—Here, you little rascal, don't shoot those firecrackers so near my barn. You might set it on fire.

The Kid—Well, ain't ye enough of a patriot to sacrifice a dinky old barn fer the glory of yer country?

Nipley—How did you celebrate the Fourth, old man?

Tanque—Got loaded, and then got fired.

ICE IN HOT COUNTRIES.

It is Not Much Appreciated and Nearly Everybody Gets Along Without It.

Ever since the trade in artificial ice began manufacturers of ice-making plants have been seeking markets in hot countries, where no natural ice is procurable, except in the neighborhood of lofty mountains. They have sold some ice plants in tropical cities, but it is doubtful if they would have met even with moderate success if it had not been for brewers and a few other manufacturers who find ice desirable in their business. The people generally get along very well without ice, as their fathers did before them, and comparatively few have learned to appreciate its desirable qualities since ice was presented to them.

Our Department of State, some years ago, collected facts about the ice industry and consumption in tropical countries. It has just published in the "Consular Reports" the result of the latest investigations in the same field. Both these reports show that the people of the tropics care very little for ice and that no real progress is making toward the general introduction of ice in hot countries.

In Gautemala, for example, ice is used mainly in saloons, restaurants and hotels and very few families own a refrigerator or buy ice. The city of San Salvador, with a population of 30,000 consumes only 5,000 pounds per day; there is no cold storage in the city and all meat sold on the market is killed the previous night. There is not a single ice plant in Bolivia, but some naurtal ice, brought by the Indians from the mountains, is sold in La Paz. In the large seaport of Bahia, Brazil, the first attempt at ice making was abandoned because there was no demand. For three years past, however, one small plant has been making about one and a half tons a day, which is sold to the hotels and drink shops patronized by the foreign population and a few foreign families. The ice is not used to preserve food, but only to cool drinks. Butchers say they have no need for ice. The laws require that all meat killed one day shall be sold before noon next day, and just enough meat is killed to supply the average daily demand.

In the city of Barranquilla, Colombia there are no refrigerating plants or cooling rooms and meat, not salted soon after the animals are killed, becomes unfit for food. The Deputy Consul at Colon writes that no town in his consular district, except Colon, would consume enough ice to justify the erection of a plant. The only ice factory in Ecuador is run by a brewing firm at Guayaquil and the firm consumes the entire product. In Uruguay there is a prejudice against cold drinks or food refrigeration. Consul Goldschmidt writes from Venezuela that the small demand for ice there is due to the fact that victuals and meats are not kept over night, but are daily bought in the market for immediate use.

Origin of the Months Names.

"January was named after the Roman god, Janus; the deity with two faces, one looking into the past and the other gazing forward to the future," writes Clifford Howard, in the Ladies' Home Journal. "February comes from the Latin word februo, to purify. It was customary for the Romans to observe festivals of purification during that month. March owes its name to the old God of War. Among the Saxons this month was known as Lenct, meaning spring; and this is the origin of our word Lent. April was named from the Latin aperio, to open, in signification of the opening of flowers. The Saxons called the month Eastre, in honor of their Goddess of Spring, from which comes our word Easter. May was named after the Roman goddess Maia, and June was so-called in honor of Juno. July was named in honor of Julius Caesar, and August gets its name from Augustus Caesar. September is from the Latin septem, seven, this being the seventh month according to the old Roman calendar. October, November and December also retain the names by which they were known under the old calendar, when there were but ten months in the year—octo, novem and decem meaning eight, nine and ten."

A Little Sermon in this Child's Remark.

"The weather sometimes played havoc with those necessary concomitants of religious life in the far West—church sociables—if it did not put a stop to church services altogether," writes Rev. Cyrus Townsend Brady, in narrating his experiences as "A Missionary in the Great West," in the Ladies' Home Journal. "On one occasion, in one of my missions, we had made elaborate preparations for a great crowd, which was kept at home by a heavy rain. A few of us who had braved the storm were seated in much discontent in the parlor expressing our opinions with the freedom we all use in like circumstances. A small daughter of the house, who had been an interested listener, suddenly remarked during a pause in the conversation 'Now, you're all mad at God because it's raining.'"

Rocking Royalty.

It is not generally known that when royal personages intend to take a long drive, in the course of which they will undoubtedly be compelled to bow several hundred times, a rocking seat is arranged in the carriage. Such a seat helps the perpetual bowing motion, which otherwise woud produce a fearful headache if not injury to the spine. Queen Victoria used such a carriage for all her long drives in Dublin recently.

Raising the Hat an Ancient Salutation.

When a knight of old entered a company of ladies he removed his helmet to indicate that he considered himself among friends, and that there was no need to protect himself. This practice has survived in the custom of raising the hat when saluting a lady.—"Ladies' Home Journal."